

For Immediate Release: *May 23, 2011*

Washington D.C.—Today, Congressman Duncan Hunter, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, introduced legislation directing the Secretary of the Navy to name the next available ship after Marine Corps Sergeant Rafael Peralta. Hunter is also preparing an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, which the House is expected to debate this week.

Click [here](#) to read Congressman Hunter's letter to the Secretary of the Navy.

“Sergeant Peralta gave his life for this country,” said Congressman Hunter. “He should have received the Medal of Honor, but was wrongly denied the nation’s highest award for military valor. It’s only right that the Navy name its next ship after Sergeant Peralta. It’s an honor that he deserves.”

Brigadier General (retired) **Bob Cardenas**, a longtime resident of San Diego, expressed strong support for the effort. Cardenas, who was born in Mexico and served 35 years in the armed forces, added, “Sergeant Peralta was a courageous individual who saved the lives of six other brave Marines and should have received the Medal of Honor for what he did. Naming a ship after Sergeant Peralta is a well-deserved honor for such a brave and selfless American.”

Sergeant Peralta, who grew up in Southeast San Diego, was nominated for the Medal of Honor for smothering a grenade with his body during combat in Fallujah, Iraq. He was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross instead. A team of specialists, which included pathologists and other experts, conducted an investigation at the direction of the Secretary of Defense and determined that Peralta did not consciously pull the grenade into his body. The conclusion contradicts the eye-witness accounts of the Marines fighting alongside Peralta, as well as the recommendation put forward by Marine Corps leadership.

Speaking for Sergeant Peralta’s family, **Icela Donald**, sister of Sergeant Peralta, said “We are truly thankful and honored. This is a way to keep my brother’s legacy alive. After everything we’ve been through, this means so much to the entire family.”